

VZCZCXYZ0005
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHYN #1521 2521334
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 081334Z SEP 08
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0294
INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 0132
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0279
RHEHAAA/ NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SANA 001521

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA/ARP FOR AMACDONALD; DRL FOR JBARGHOUT/JKERN; PRM FOR
ETHIBAULT/EHARRIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PHUM PREF PREL KIRF YM

SUBJECT: ROYG AGREES TO NOT DEPORT BAHĀ'IS TO IRAN, BUT
STILL INSISTS ON DEPORTATION

REF: A. SANA 1473

1B. EMAIL EXCHANGE BETWEEN HALA RHARRIT AND
ELIZABETH HARRIS DTD SEPTEMBER 4

¶1. (SBU) On September 6, the DCM stressed to National Security Bureau (NSB) and Presidential Office Director Ali al-Anisi the importance of not deporting the detained Baha'is to Iran (ref A). Al-Anisi replied that the ROYG would not forcibly deport the detainees to Iran, but insisted that they would be deported. He added that the ROYG now understands the persecution that Baha'is face in Iran and will hence allow them to be deported to the country of their choice.

¶2. (SBU) The Ambassador told Interior Minister Mutahar al-Masri in a September 7 meeting that the USG is likely to accept the detainees, but cautioned that the US resettlement process is lengthy. A relieved al-Masri offered to "turn them over" immediately, prompting the Ambassador to clarify that the process does not work that way, adding that the USG would appreciate the ROYG releasing the detainees while they are processed for resettlement.

¶3. (SBU) During a September 8 phone call with UNHCR-Yemen senior protection officer Samer Haddadin, Poloff asked if UNHCR could provide a resettlement referral to the USG's regional refugee coordinator, per ref B guidance. Haddadin replied that UNHCR is expecting to hear from the Prime Minister's office on whether it can gain access to the detainees. (Note: UNHCR representative Claire Bourgeois met with the Prime Minister on September 3 and asked for access to the prisoners. End Note.) Haddadin said that when UNHCR receives access, they will send a resettlement officer to conduct a prison visit and to provide a resettlement application. Once that occurs, Haddadin said UNHCR-Beirut will provide the USG's regional refugee coordinator with a referral to proceed with the resettlement process.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Although Post has not yet lost hope for the detainees' release, it is taking the necessary steps for possible US resettlement. Post will continue to follow-up and provide any pertinent updates. End Comment.

SECHE